

TITLE: CIA, Ghana, and the [REDACTED] (b)(1)

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The Scranage Case

CIA, Ghana, and the

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This article is based on a Counterintelligence Analysis Report published by the CIA's Counterintelligence Center Analysis Group in January 1990.

In 1983, Sharon Scranage became the first known CIA employee to spy for an African intelligence service operating (b)(1)

(b)(1) Scranage was assigned to the CIA Station in Accra, Ghana, and (b)(1)Ghanaians figured prominently in her downfall—her lover, Michael Soussoudis (b)(1)

(b)(1) A look at the roles and motivations of each explains what happened.

Sharon Scranage

Sharon Marie Scranage, born in October 1955, was one of three children in a close-knit family with deep roots in rural Virginia. Friends and neighbors recalled the Scranage family as “perfect” and Sharon as a “good kid.” The Scranages were active in a local church, her father worked for many years at the Marine Base in Quantico, and her brother was a security man at the US Naval Surface Weapons Center at Dahlgren. The family were solid, self-respecting citizens, well known in their community. Scranage graduated in 1974 from high school, where she belonged to the honor society and was a cheerleader. After graduating from a Roanoke business college, she joined the CIA as a clerk-stenographer in May 1976 and was assigned to the Office of Imagery Analysis. She was promoted one year later.

Scranage married a security guard with a private firm in 1978. She divorced him in November 1980, (b)(1)

(b)(1) Four years after their divorce, however, she

kept him informed about her Agency employment and impending assignment to Ghana. (b)(6)

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In April 1982, Scranage was assigned to the Africa Division in CIA's Directorate of Operations

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In May 1983, she was assigned to Accra as an operations support assistant. Despite her desire to go overseas again, Scranage noted before leaving for Accra that she was not “enthusiastic” but “would make the best of it.”

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Michael Soussoudis

Michael Agbotui Soussoudis was born in April 1946 in Accra to a French-Ghanaian woman and (b)(6) Greek sailor. From 1966 to about 1983, he lived

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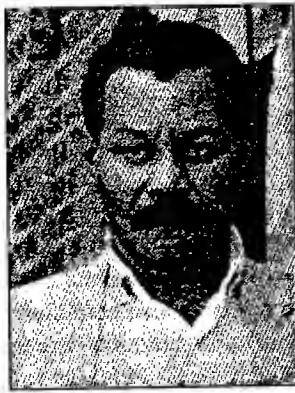
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Figure 1
The Sharon Scranage Case: Key Players

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Sharon Marie Scranage



Michael Agbotui Soussoudis
*Scranage's lover and
Ghanaian case officer*

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in West Germany and subsequently in the US. Soussoudis attended college in New York, where he married and later divorced an American woman. After he returned to Accra, he spent much of his time with American women. Friends and relatives called him a "playboy" and "more American than African."

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Background

When Scranage arrived in Accra on 27 May 1983, Ghana was in a transitional phase marked by continuing revolutionary rhetoric tempered by some signs of pragmatism.

Figure 2. This feature article in the People's Daily Graphic was part of an anti-CIA campaign in the Ghanaian press.

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Several days later, Scranage reported to CIA Headquarters, where the Office of Security had decided to interview her and give her a polygraph examination.

[redacted] and Scranage quickly admitted having given classified information to the Ghanaians. CIA informed the FBI and the Departments of State and Justice of its preliminary findings.

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During interrogation, Scranage agreed to help the FBI lure Soussoudis to the US;

Scranage took annual leave from 29 June to 7 July to visit her parents. Soussoudis, who had arrived in the US, tried unsuccessfully to contact her during her leave.

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Upon her return to Washington, Scranage, at the instruction of the FBI, contacted Soussoudis and arranged to meet him at a motel in northern Virginia on 10 July. Soussoudis appeared at the motel and was arrested without incident. Scranage was arrested the following day.

Scranage was charged with espionage, conspiracy to commit espionage, disclosure of identities of US intelligence agents, conspiracy to disclose classified information, and disclosure of classified information. She pled guilty. In November 1985, she was sentenced to five years in prison at Alderson, West Virginia.

In April 1986, a US District Judge reduced Scranage's sentence to two years, citing the disparity between her sentence and Soussoudis's treatment. Soussoudis had received a 20-year sentence for seeking information from Scranage about CIA agents in Ghana and Ghanaian dissidence, but he was allowed to return to Ghana in exchange for

most of the agents—and their families—that Scranage had compromised.

Sharon Scranage was paroled in July 1987 after 18 months in prison. Michael Soussoudis went home in November 1985 to a hero's welcome.

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